

STANDARDS COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE AGAINST PLAN – REVIEW SEPTEMBER 2011

Wiltshire Council’s Vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities, underpinned by 3 key goals:

- 1. Deliver high quality, low cost, customer focused services.**
- 2. Ensure local, open, honest decision-making.**
- 3. Working together to support Wiltshire’s communities**

Wiltshire Council Standards Committee Vision is to raise public trust and confidence in local democracy by promoting consistently high standards of conduct throughout local government in Wiltshire

Top Priorities for Action 2011-12

Standards Committee Goals	Standards Committee Output	Targets	Owner Responsibility	Comments
Promote the ethical well-being of Wiltshire Council by embedding standards further within the Council	Develop local voluntary Code of Conduct and range of possible sanctions for adoption by full Council	Voluntary Code and procedure for receiving and handling complaints developed by September 2011	Nina Wilton	<i>Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011 with significant changes being made to the earlier proposals in the Bill. Work on a new code of conduct on hold until further detail of possible national code available and more is known about the new rules on interests. Complaints procedure to be agreed by Standards Committee on 7 March 2012</i>
	Develop proposals for role and, composition of Standards Committee informed by detail and scope of new voluntary local Code, any statutory requirements from Localism Bill and Wiltshire Council needs	Standards Committee agrees voluntary Code for presentation to full Council – Spring 2012 following Royal Assent for Localism Bill	Ian Gibbons/Nina Wilton/Chair	<i>New standards framework under the Localism Act due to come into force on 1 July 2012. Proposed Code and all associated procedures and organisational structures will now be taken to May Council meeting</i>
		Standards Committee agrees range of possible sanctions, submitted for Cabinet input, and ready for presentation to full Council – Spring 2012	Ian Gibbons/Nina Wilton/Chair	
		Consultation document to relevant stakeholders as Bill completes passage through Parliament. Report and recommendations to Council based	Ian Gibbons/Nina	<i>Possible sanctions to be agreed by Standards Committee at meeting on 7 March 2012</i>

		on stakeholder consultation and Constitution Focus Group feedback. Probable timing late spring 2012	Wilton/Chair	<i>Constitution Focus Group's views given at meeting on 21 February 2012. Members' seminar being arranged prior to Council Meeting in May 2012. Arrangements for consulting parish councils being considered on 7 March.</i>
Work with Parish, Town and City Councils to support them in their application of the local standards framework	<p>Develop training package for Town, Parish and City (TP&C) Councils in conjunction with WALC; finalise and implement programme for delivery of training; monitor the take-up and effectiveness of training.</p> <p>Monitor developments relating to standards of conduct affecting TP&C Councils in the Localism Bill and develop appropriate support and information for TP&C Councils.</p> <p>Develop proposals for support (if relevant) for TP&C Council codes to be produced depending upon detail of Localism Bill</p> <p>Provide training event for TP&C councils on the areas of the Localism Bill that affects them</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Monitoring on-going. When final amendments to the Bill go through Parliament, assess impact on TP&C Councils and develop appropriate information materials for publication on web-site and/or support for implementation of local codes (subject to capacity in the Governance Service)</p> <p>Present to relevant decision making body of the authority in late spring/early summer 2012 – timing depends on passage of Bill through Parliament</p> <p>To be arranged when the details of the Bill are known</p>	<p>Nina Wilton / Vice Chair</p> <p>Ian Gibbons/Nina Wilton/Chair</p> <p>Ian Gibbons/Nina Wilton/Chair</p> <p>Nina Wilton/Vice Chair</p>	<p>New training package designed to include reference to proposed changes in Localism Bill. Training offered but limited take-up from T&P Councils</p> <p><i>Monitoring Officer wrote to TP&C Councils on 30 December 2011 updating them on impact of Localism Act on them. Update provided in February Parish Newsletter. Further information will be given once the work on the code and associated procedures are agreed by the Standards Committee</i></p> <p><i>This will form part of the proposals put to Council at its May meeting</i></p>
Inform and engage the public on standards in local government	Ensure that the Standards Content on the Wiltshire Council Website is easily accessible	Completed	Nina Wilton / Mr. Craig McCallum	

Chairman's Overview.

1. The main area of work since September 2011 has been using the committee's experience of the current local assessment and determination of code of conduct complaints to develop arrangements for dealing with complaints under the new standards framework as required under the Localism Act 2011. This includes proposals for a new standards committee and Independent Persons. It has taken into account the views of the Constitution Focus Group. The work on the new code is on hold until more is known about the possible national code and the details of the new rules on interests are available.
2. The committee will involve TP&C Councils in the development of the new arrangements. To this end the Monitoring Officer wrote to them on 30 December 2011 with information about the new standards framework and provided an update in the February Parish newsletter. Further updates will be provided as the work progresses.
3. The committee awaits details of the transitional rules to determine how it should deal with complaints under the existing regime that are outstanding when the new standards framework comes into effect.

Other Areas for Action 2011

Standard Committee Goals	Standard Committee Output	Targets	Owner Responsibility	Comments
Apply the local standards framework in a fair, efficient and proportionate manner	Improve efficiency of local assessment process	All Investigating Officers' reports to clearly identify the Findings of Fact wef 1 November 2011 Assessment Sub Committees to give clear direction on areas of complaint to be included in the investigation wef 1 November 2011	Nina Wilton Chairmen of Assessment Sub Committees	<i>Complete</i> <i>Complete</i>
Promote the ethical well-being of Wiltshire Council by embedding standards further within the Council and promote standards in partnerships	Support the Council in moving to a single culture by promoting agreed values Periodic meetings between Chairman, Monitoring Officer, Leader and CE Increased Standards Committee visibility by attendance at Council, Cabinet, committee meetings and at Area Boards Oversight of Council's complaint handling to ensure complaints are dealt with efficiently and lead to improvements in services to the public Review partnership governance arrangements Incorporate agreed values and standards of behaviour in partnership documentation	Consider Wiltshire Council Behaviours Framework at meeting 23 November 2011 Met 3 August 2011. Chairman or Vice Chairman to attend Council Meetings (6 per year) and 50% of Cabinet meetings. SC representation at all Area Boards at least once per year Local Government Ombudsman Report and statistical report to be considered by the Committee annually Scope of Complaints System Review to be considered by committee at meeting 23 November 2011 Complete No timescale has been set for this yet.	Ian Gibbons/Chair Ian Gibbons/Chair Chair/Vice Chair Nina Wilton Nina Wilton Ian Gibbons	<i>Complete</i> <i>A further meeting has not yet been arranged</i> <i>Annual Ombudsman's report considered in September 2011</i> <i>Committee received report on the review at its meeting in November. Restructure of complaints team underway</i> <i>Nothing to report as yet</i>
Work with Parish, Town and City Councils to support them in their application of the local standards framework.	Communicate regularly with TP& C Councils on standards issues	Provide articles in Parish newsletters as required Provide annual digest of code of conduct cases	Nina Wilton /Chair	<i>See above on involvement of TP & C Councils in development of arrangements for new standards framework</i>